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ABSTRACT

A diverse and growing body of research points to the need for an overhaul of America's public education systems. The Panasonic Foundation created its Partnership Program for systemic educational reform in 1987. Since then, the foundation has collaborated with 16 school districts and 3 state departments of education. This book informs others interested in initiating, building, and maintaining systemic school reform. The book sets conceptual and strategic frameworks for collaborative reform, describes how Panasonic makes a partnership, highlights critical components such as technical assistance, and presents a series of vignettes and cases to illustrate how its approach has evolved over nearly a decade of school-reform experience. The introduction provides an overview of the Panasonic partnerships. Chapter 1 describes how partnerships are initiated and formalized through a key "unleashing" event, usually focused on professional development. Technical assistance for systemic reform is described in chapter 2 as the key component of the partnership strategy. The third chapter presents a case study of the first partnership, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Other major components of the reform strategy, which illustrate how systemic capacity to pursue change is built and sustained, are presented in the fourth chapter. Chapter 5 includes a case study of a more recent partnership in Allentown, Pennsylvania. The final chapter summarizes the lessons learned about the selection and nurturing of partnerships, critical factors in educational reform, and the foundation's enabling function in the reform process; and discusses plans for future partnerships. Four appendixes contain a list of the Senior Panasonic Foundation consultants; the framework for the foundation; four templets for partnerships; and where the Panasonic foundation has worked. A glossary and an index are included. (LMI)

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